

6-19-1878

Letter from Emma Stebbins, Hyde Park, New York,  
to Anne Whitney, Boston, Massachusetts, 1878  
June 19

Emma Stebbins

Wellesley College Archives

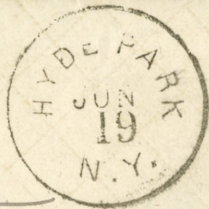
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Miss Anne Whitney

92. Mt. Vernon St.

Boston.

(Mass)





Hyde Park. Duches Co. N. Y.

June. 19/78

My dear Anne Whitney -

I am very pleased that you wrote home about the Book, and glad that you like it. There are few whose approbation I should more covet, because I believe you would never say pleasant things merely to compliment me - that whatever you could in conscience say approvingly, I might depend upon both feeling and judgment. Do not forget that you have promised to say more to me about it, when you have had time to look into it more carefully.

I recognize the justice of your discrimination, in your remarks about Biographies in general - but dear friend I am sure you recognize in this direction as well as every other, that "there is a divinity which shapes our ends" - and that no true worker can ever say: "so I will do, or so" - and be contented to see the end in that declaration - this seems to me more the *modus operandi* of mechanics - than of creative art in

whatever direction. If we have any-  
thing of the divine gift - whatever we  
do must be more or less a creation which  
as often surpasses ourselves as others.  
In none than me. of the kind appre-  
ciative letters I am now daily receiving.  
The same thought occurs - "I do not  
believe you know what a beautiful  
book you have made." which is very  
true - if it is beautiful -. So we "build  
better than we know" - and so our  
work must be something out of our  
mindselves, which we cannot lay  
out and determine beforehand. —

I remember in Rome, the discussion  
we used to have in this Dept - and  
how the idea of building better than  
we knew - was laughed to scorn by  
Mr Gibson - Miss Horner and that ilk.  
I should like much to discuss all  
these questions with you - but I cannot  
see when it may become possible  
all business with publishers, except  
that one visit I made when I was



you - seems to be easily conducted by mail  
and there is no present likelihood of my  
getting to Boston - we are much bonded  
together just now, and tied as I always  
am by feelings & circumstances. I am  
contemplating the necessity of going to  
damp - for a month or two - to encourage  
my little house by living in it - and to make  
a home for my Boy - during his holidays  
but I do so with regret - for I hate to leave  
my sisters - and my uncertain health  
makes me sadly wanting in energy &  
purpose. - Perhaps the time may come  
if not here - then hereafter, when we may  
compose notes of our experiences and our  
thinkings - meantime many thanks for  
the kind wish in your post - & do write  
to me sometimes.

I was very much in hopes, when I read  
that you had a work in which you were  
interested - that it was a Memorial  
Fountain, which somebody wrote to me  
about a while back. - It was some  
lady in Cincinnati - a Cleveland - I proph.  
which, but it was one of those big Western  
towns - who wanted to erect a Memorial

to her husband, and had that excellent idea.  
my health could not allow me to undertake  
such a work - so in writing to decline it,  
as they had asked me for information of  
various kinds, I took the liberty of mentioning  
your name, and hoped they might  
have had the good sense to put it in  
your hands - This was some time ago  
however, and I suppose they have  
by this time given it to some stencutter  
or plumber -

You will be pleased to hear that the  
Book has gone into a second edition  
and Eng<sup>d</sup> not yet heard from - This  
is substantial success - I forgot to  
ask if you had seen Mrs. Tilton's book,  
"Constantinople" - a translation from  
the Italian for which she has received  
high praise - It will be worth your reading  
she is remaining in Rome this summer,  
artists are all feeling the pressure of the  
times and she cannot afford her usual  
Villégiatura - My kindest greetings  
to Miss Manning -  
Yours ever faithfully,  
Ed.

my address after the end of my college - "Loring, Mass."